

Mayor's Year-End Report 2020

Delivered on December 15, 2020, by Mayor Bryan King

I am pleased to provide this year-end report to Council, and our residents, that outlines the Town's work over the past year. As we all know, the pandemic caused many complications and hampered Council's plans, but we nonetheless maintained programs and services and moved forward with important projects. My report will cover capital works projects and the activities of the Departments, and I'll begin with the former.

Capital Works Projects

We launched or concluded five (5) capital works projects in 2020, and they are as follows:

- Fallsview Park boat launch/slipway/dock, gateway signage, and directional signage: As part of the *Exploits River Development Strategy*, in October 2020, Council awarded the construction contract that will see the Fallsview Park boat launch/slipway/dock and the gateway and directional signage developed. Some of the work has started, but the project is scheduled for completion in the upcoming year. The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador funded this project (approx. 67%), and Council is using its gas tax for its share. No borrowing is required.
- Station Road floating wharf: We acquired the new floating wharf for the Station Road slipway this year. Unfortunately, it arrived after the boating season, but it will be available for residents and tourists in the coming year. The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador funded this project (approx. 43%), and Council is using its gas tax for its share. No borrowing is required.
- Riverside Drive Access Point: Phase 1B of the *Exploits River Development Strategy* identifies a site on Riverside Drive, which is near the Trestle, as a strategic access point to the Exploits River. In partnership with ACOA and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Council announced this project in October 2020. We have thus far engaged engineering services, and the design work is underway. This project is scheduled for completion in 2021. The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador funded this project (approx. 67%), and Council is using its gas tax for its share. No borrowing is required.
- Greenridge Road Waterline Loop Project. In recent weeks, the contractor for this project installed the infrastructure to connect the loop! The Town is closely monitoring the

performance of the system in that area to ensure the water problems are resolved. In the event additional work is required, the budget has capacity. Fortunately, the construction costs for the loop came well under budget, leaving room for other work, if needed. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador funded this project (80%), and Council may either borrow for its share or use budget resources.

- Riverside Drive Road Upgrade: We upgraded the asphalt on Riverside Drive this year. This project was announced in 2019. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador funded this project (50%), and Council borrowed its share.

Public Works

The Public Works Department was active in 2020. I'll say again that the employees in our Public Works Department are among the best in the province. Their work is not easy, but it is essential. They maintain our water system, wastewater system, and roads, among other things. In many instances, their work is completed in harsh and unfavourable conditions, and we sincerely appreciate what they do for our community.

Some of the activities that the Public Works Department completed this year are as follows:

- Implemented the 2020 curbside residential Spring clean-up program. Over the three weeks (May – June), the Department collected approximately 123 tonnes of debris and waste.
- Repaired, through a contract, 1,120 m² of asphalt, including areas on Main Street, Beaumont Heights, Riverside Drive, and Kinsmen Drive, among others. Council invested approximately \$68,000 in regular asphalt repair in 2020. The Department directly distributed around 35 tonnes of asphalt to fix potholes.
- Repaired six (6) waterline breaks as of December 15, 2020.
- Repaired five (5) residential sewer laterals in accordance with Council's regulations.
- Repaired four (4) residential water laterals in accordance with Council's regulations.
- Replaced two (2) culverts on Thirteen Mile Crossing.
- Began installing a new guardrail and posts on Riverside Drive. Currently, the project is around 50-60% completed.
- Replaced five (5) culverts on Forest Road.
- Installed 30 inflow protectors on manholes.

- Sealed cracks that developed in our road network. In 2019, we acquired a “Crack Sealer” that deposits a tar-like substance in cracks to prevent water erosion.
- Swept streets and roads throughout the town with the new sweeper.
- Addressed issues with the water system that were associated with the new Hampton’s Hill water tower. Great attention is given to the water system to ensure its proper function.

This list does not represent all the Department’s activities. Services and works such as snow clearing, line painting, chlorine sampling, and many other things happen that are very important.

Recreation

The Recreation Department was impacted most by the pandemic. Unfortunately, many programs and events, if they occurred, were restricted in some manner by the public health measures. As we know, on March 17, 2020, the Pat O’Reilly Memorial Stadium was closed for the remainder of the 2019-2020 season, and we did not operate the Fallsview Municipal Park this summer or deliver the summer recreation program. It was a different year, to be sure, and I know we were all happy to see some level of normalcy return when alert level 2 was announced this past summer. We were also pleased to open the stadium in October 2020 for the 2020-2021 season.

While many of our regular activities in recreation were hampered, some things did occur (perhaps with a COVID-19 twist), and they are as follows:

- A new gazebo was added to the Riverside Drive boardwalk with support from Marathon Gold.
- The Riverside Drive boardwalk was extended to incorporate the new gazebo. This was made possible by funding received through a JCP project.
- New stairs were constructed on the east side of the Trestle, which was part of the JCP project.
- Four (4) summer students were hired through the Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) program, and they focused exclusively on maintaining grass and cleaning ditches throughout the town.
- The plant at the stadium went through costly maintenance. The Town invested approximately \$25,000 to replace chiller and condenser seals.
- Vegetable preserve workshops were held in the Fall with funding received under the Community Healthy Living Fund. These workshops are part of the Community Garden Harvest Program.
- Several Fall events were held, including Halloween Trivia Night, Halloween Skate Night, Pumpkin People/Scarecrow Contest, and an outdoor movie in the Fallsview Park.
- Christmas on the Boardwalk began on December 1, 2020. This event, which takes weeks of preparation and thousands of dollars, will run until January 6, 2021.

Again, the above list does not represent all the Department's activities, but it provides a comprehensive summary for 2020.

Other

In addition to the activities carried out by the Public Works and Recreation Departments, the Town also;

- worked with Marathon Gold to disburse \$19,250 in funding. \$10,000 was given to our non-profit organizations and schools for COVID-19 relief, and the balance was used for the community garden, best garden contest, Fire Department equipment, Christmas on the Boardwalk, and the new gazebo.
- applied for funding through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to develop an asset management strategy/plan.
- updated the Town's capital investment plan under the gas tax program.
- successfully obtained funding from ACOA and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, totalling \$378,160, for phase 1B of the Exploits River Tourism Product Development Project (Riverside Drive access point).
- successfully obtained funding for the 2021 Community Garden Harvest Program (\$3,700) and the Healthy Cooking Workshop for Youth (\$3,100). A \$25,000 application was submitted to the New Horizons for Seniors Program to deliver a project for seniors that involves quilting and painting.
- applied for three COVID-19 support grants/programs. We successfully received the \$10,000 arena grant, and our applications for the \$2,000 recreation microgrant and the COVID-19 stimulus program are pending.
- delivered the Remembrance Day Service and the annual Christmas tree light-up event.
- processed the following permits:
 - o 9 new dwellings (up from 4 in 2019).
 - o 1 demolition (down from 3 in 2019).
 - o 1 commercial development (down from 2 in 2019).
 - o 8 extensions (up from 4 in 2019).
 - o 25 accessory buildings (up from 11 in 2019).

Again, I must state, while I've shared many details about the Town's activities for 2020, this is not an exhaustive list. My year-end report focuses on our achievements as it relates to strategic and operational plans.

I would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to recognize a significant and special person. Councillor Doreen Tremblett, who is known and respected by many people, reached a significant milestone when it comes to her service to the community this year. Councillor Tremblett served on the Bishop's Falls Town Council for 35 years! She was first elected to the Town Council in the 1981-1985 term and served as Deputy Mayor for 16 of her 35 years. Councillor Tremblett volunteers countless hours to her community, and I know I speak for everyone when I extend sincere appreciation for her years of service.

In closing, I want to express my appreciation to Council and staff for your hard work and dedication. It takes many hands working together to run the municipality, and every person plays an important role.

Thank you.

I wish everyone Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.